

CHAPTER 12

HONOR GUARDS

In the Continental Army, honor guards were used as a protective measure and as a means of showing the improvement in discipline in the newly formed army. They were probably selected specifically for their size and strength and maybe their proven prowess in combat. Today, the honor guard formation is a special courtesy to visiting dignitaries. Members of the guard are selected for their soldierly appearance and superior discipline.

12-1. BASIC INFORMATION

The basic information herein applies to all honor guards.

a. An honor guard consists of a band, Colors, salute battery (when available and appropriate), and a formation of troops. Honor guards render personal honors to persons of high military or civilian rank or position upon arrival or departure from a military command. Honor guards are not a substitute for those ceremonies appropriate in a review or parade.

b. An honor guard should not be so large as to compromise the exceptional standards required of honor guards. Uniforms will be those prescribed in Army regulations and tables of allowance.

c. The senior commander or his appointed representative is the host and takes part in the ceremony. He is briefed on the sequence of events and advises the person to be honored of actions that will take place.

d. Before the arrival of the person(s) to be honored, the honor guard commander positions the band, formation of troops, and salute battery from right to left in that order. The troops are formed in line of companies or platoons with the Colors centered. When conditions dictate, the salute battery may be located separately but its control and purpose must not be impaired.

12-2. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS

The sequence of events for conducting an honor guard are discussed herein.

a. At the approach of the person(s) to be honored, the honor guard commander faces about, commands ***Honor guard*, ATTENTION**, and then faces about again. The host welcomes the person(s) to be honored on arrival, escorts him to the position not more than 20 steps in front of and facing the honor guard commander, and takes his position on the guest's left. When the person(s) to be honored has halted in his position, the honor guard commander faces about, commands ***Present*, ARMS**, faces about, and salutes.

b. As the honor guard commander executes the *Hand Salute*, the band begins the appropriate honors. When a salute battery is employed, the first round is fired simultaneously with the first note of the music and remaining rounds are fired at three-second intervals. All military personnel in the vicinity of the honor guard formation, except those on security duty, salute during the firing of the *Cannon Salute* and the rendering of honors (AR 600-25).

NOTE: If a foreign dignitary's honors include his national anthem, the sequence of the ceremony is: honors, inspection, and "The Army Goes Rolling Along" concluding the ceremony.

c. On the completion of the honors, the honor guard commander terminates his *Salute*, faces about, and commands **Order, ARMS**. He then faces about.

d. At this time, the honoree(s) and host march forward and halt three steps from the honor guard commander. The honor guard commander salutes and reports "**Sir, the honor guard is prepared for inspection.**" The band begins to play appropriate music upon the *salute* of the guard commander and continues to play until the members of the reviewing party have returned to their posts. The guard commander then guides the honoree(s) and host to the right of the band. The inspecting party passes along the front and rear of the line of troops, to include the salute battery (if used), with the option of omitting the salute battery from the inspection if its distance from the remainder of the honor guard is prohibitive.

e. The honor guard commander takes a position on the right of the person(s) honored and guides him through the inspection. The host takes a position on the right of the honor guard commander.

f. The inspection begins at the right of the band. The inspecting party passes along the front rank of troops. Ranks are not opened; the individual members of the honor guard do not come to *Inspection Arms* or execute *Eyes Right*.

g. The members of the inspecting party render *Hand Salutes* when they pass in front of the Colors.

h. The inspection terminates at the right flank of the band. The honor guard commander commands **Party, HALT**. The bandmaster has the band play softly until the reviewing party members begin marching back to their posts. The honor guard commander faces to the half left in marching, takes two steps, halts, and faces about. The host repositions himself to the left of the honoree(s). When the host is in position, the honor guard commander and the honoree(s) exchange *Salutes*. Upon termination of the *Salutes*, the honoree(s) and the host immediately face to the half left in marching and return to their posts. The honor guard commander hesitates momentarily, then faces to the right in marching, and returns to his post.

i. After the inspection is terminated and the honoree(s) and host return to their positions, the honor guard is given **Present, ARMS** and the band plays the National Anthem. If the honoree(s) is a foreign dignitary, the national anthem of his country is played first, followed by an approximate three-second drum roll and the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner."

j. When "The Star Spangled Banner" ends, the command **Order, ARMS** is given. The honor guard commander faces about after the command for *Order Arms* is given and remains at *Attention* while the band plays one chorus of "The Army Goes Rolling Along," beginning at the introduction. At the completion of "The Army Goes Rolling Along," the honor guard commander salutes and announces "**Sir, this concludes the ceremony.**" The honor guard remains at *Attention* until the honoree(s) has departed. The band may play incidental background music while the honoree(s) is being introduced to the staff and other guests.

12-3. HONOR CORDON CEREMONIES

In addition to a scheduled honor guard ceremony, honor cordon ceremonies may be used when welcoming or bidding farewell to distinguished visitors. The ceremony consists of a select group of soldiers with characteristics associated with honor guards, designated to honor and provide security at the immediate arrival or departure site.

a. The honor cordon normally consists of two squads, a senior sergeant, a cordon commander, and a host. When deemed appropriate, the commander may elect to use a band, Colors, and distinguishing flags.

(1) **Arrival.** Upon arrival of the craft or vehicle, the cordon is marched to a position near the exit (ramp) in two columns, centered on the exit, faced to the center, and dressed with about three steps distance between the ranks. As the honored guest(s) and greeting party depart the immediate vicinity of the exit, and approach within three steps of the host, the cordon commander commands **Present, ARMS**, and the entire cordon salutes simultaneously. After the honored guest(s) and all greeting party members have cleared the formation, the cordon commander commands **Order, ARMS**, and the cordon members come to *Order Arms* simultaneously (Figure 12-1, page 12-4).

(2) **Departure.** The formation for the honor cordon upon departure is basically the same as that for arrival, except the cordon commander and the senior sergeant position themselves on the flank of the formation away from the departure site. At the approach (about three steps) of the honored guest(s) and host, the cordon commander commands **Present, ARMS**, and the cordon salutes simultaneously. After the honored guest has entered the conveyance, the cordon commander commands **Order, ARMS** and remains in place until the conveyance has departed. If the conveyance is an aircraft, the cordon commander commands **Order, ARMS; Guards, FACE**, and the guards face toward the cordon commander. The honor cordon departs the area.

b. When a band and Colors are a part of the arrival or departure ceremonies, they are positioned as shown in Figure 12-1 (page 12-4). The band plays appropriate music during the ceremony. The organizational Color is dipped in salute when the honored guest(s) approaches to within six steps. After he passes, it is returned to the carry position. As soon as the guest(s) has entered the conveyance during a departure ceremony, the Colors and distinguishing flags depart the area with the honor cordon.

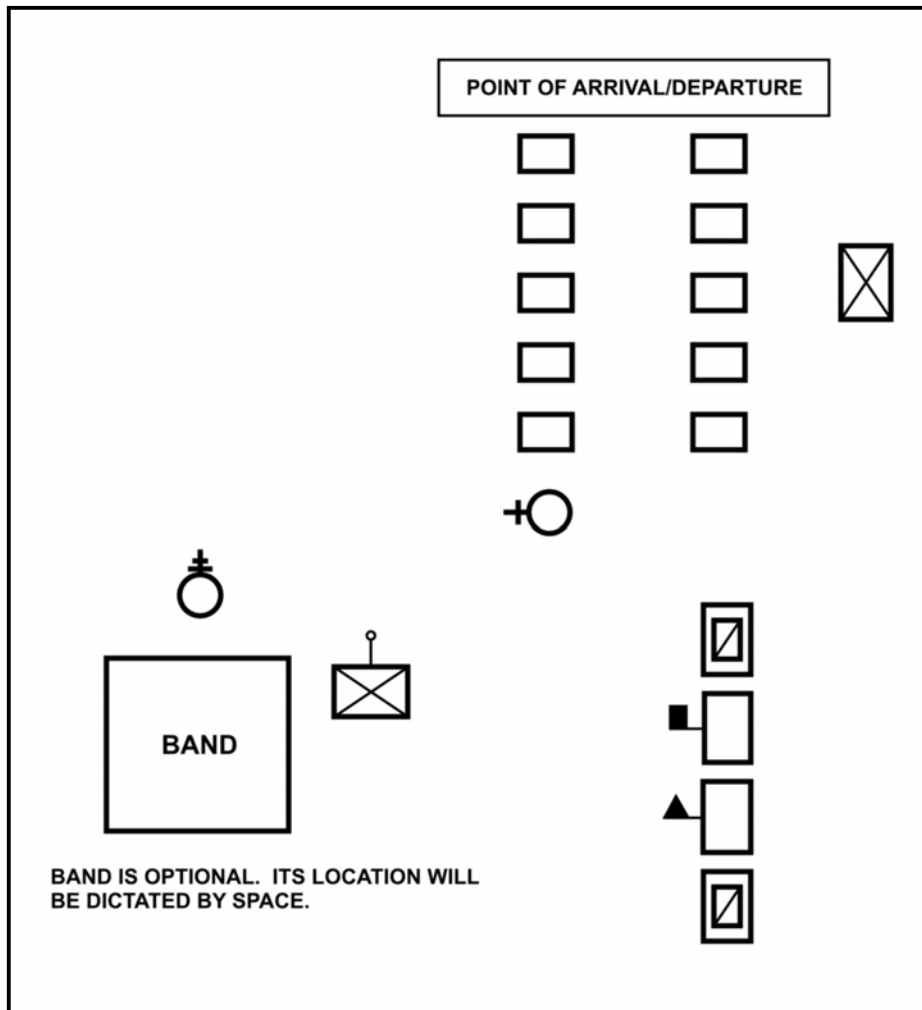


Figure 12-1. Honor cordon formations.